

U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Mississippi)
June 25, 2020

Madam President, it is a shame the Senate has been prevented the opportunity to discuss meaningful legislation to strengthen and improve our law enforcement system.

The Senate had an opportunity to implement public safety measures the American people believe are needed and the American people want.

Most importantly, the Senate was blocked from hard work toward helping bring the nation together.

Sadly, this was due to partisan politics by our Democratic colleagues.

It's disappointing that when given the chance to back up a lot of big talk about reform and change, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle simply walked away.

I was under the impression we were all in agreement that the matters addressed in this legislation were, at the very least, worth debating.

By refusing to even consider a debate, Senate Democrats leave the American people with irresponsible demands to defund the police and destruction of public property.

My friend and colleague, the junior Senator from South Carolina, worked tirelessly to produce very good legislation. He and the Leadership offered to work with the Democratic colleagues and assured them there would be an open amendment process.

Had we had a chance to proceed, I was prepared to file an amendment that would have gotten the top federal and state law enforcement officials together, from rural and urban areas, and developed a best practices curriculum for training incoming law enforcement officers.

The amendment would have provided the resources to "train the trainers."

This simply illustrates that members on both sides of the aisle wanted an opportunity to offer meaningful changes to the bill, but only one side of the aisle thought that opportunity was worthwhile.

Madam President, I am ready to debate on that and any other amendment should we do the right thing and have an open, purposeful conversation on a very critical issue.

The tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis last month exposed an erosion of public confidence in the rule of law and law enforcement practices.

There is no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of law enforcement officers, who are very good friends of mine, many of them, across the country do their jobs fairly and justly.

However, the bad actions of a few are enough to cause us, as elected leaders, to consider responsible changes to improve police practices and rebuild public confidence in those we trust with ensuring public safety.

I encourage my colleagues to reconsider and engage in this debate. It would be a real tragedy not to use this national moment in our history to improve law enforcement through more accountability, transparency, and better training.

Let's stop looking for ways to divide the American public. Let's bring people together, and work together toward meaningful reform that improves law enforcement, public safety, and the confidence Americans deserve in the rule of law.

I yield the floor.